

1 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr.Wilson, welcome.

2 MR. WILSON: Thank you, Madam Chairman. As  
3 introduction to what I'm about to speak about, of course I found  
4 out that for the first time in my life, I totally agree with a  
5 Democrat and that's Mayor Jones. So I appreciate that she may  
6 have made a Democrat out of a Republican.

7 I'm speaking today on the problems of gaming in  
8 convenience stores and such, and its the availability. Many  
9 years ago after I had moved here I had seen that I probably had  
10 this problem all my life. I came from the State of Missouri 18  
11 years ago. The introduction into this society here was  
12 devastating for me. It would have been devastating back in  
13 Missouri had the availability been there. I was not at that  
14 time fortunate enough to be able to join into the high stakes  
15 gambling that was going on at the bowling alley with business  
16 owners or this type of thing.

17 Availability would have caused me at that time to  
18 cross over the line. When I came to Las Vegas, the availability  
19 was on every street corner basically. I hadn't really thought a  
20 lot about the convenience gambling until the impact study said  
21 that was one area that I should speak about. In one square mile  
22 of which I live between Buffalo, Durango, Charleston and Sahara,  
23 I went out last week and counted 199 video machines within  
24 businesses. Right now, Saraha is still building so I don't know  
25 how many will end up there.

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1 Charleston will probably still be building. The  
2 availability to someone such as me, I believe is a major factor  
3 in creating the kind of problems that I have created for my  
4 family and for myself through our life. There are very few  
5 times I've been on the strip in the 18 years to gamble.  
6 Primarily it has been convenience stores or a casino located  
7 very close to me. It is inconvenient to go to one on the strip  
8 when you live five, six, seven miles away.

9 The local convenience stores offer an easy access.  
10 Back in Missouri -- I know, Mr. Higgins spoke about being akin  
11 to a bar or something like this. A pack of cigarettes back in  
12 Missouri never cost me three or \$400.00, okay. So it's a little  
13 bit different back there. Had the video machines or poker  
14 machines been in there then I'm sure it would have cost me two  
15 or 300 or \$500.00 for a pack of cigarettes. My problem is I  
16 went around in my area and talked to people who actually work in  
17 the business in the convenience stores and grocery stores. They  
18 are also against this, not necessarily being in the stores but  
19 where they are located.

20 As I was told by one lady last week who works the  
21 slot machines or video machines at one of the grocery stores in  
22 my area, "Why do they have pornography in the back of the video  
23 store? Because you don't want your children to see it when you  
24 walk in". She said, "Why should that theory be any different  
25 with the poker machines in the front of the store when you walk

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1 through to get your groceries with your children"? I hadn't  
2 thought of that concept but it's very true.

3 We don't do that with pornography. We hide  
4 everything basically from our children because they are not  
5 adults, but yet in gaming we do not do that. I am not against  
6 nor have I ever been against gambling in the State of Nevada.  
7 We came out here from the Midwest many years ago because this  
8 was the place to come if you were a Baptist and went to church  
9 every Sunday but for a two or three-day fling, you got to do  
10 what you wanted to do and then go back home and nobody knew  
11 about it.

12 What I am against is spreading throughout the  
13 country, and this is nothing new with me, I've been through this  
14 for the last 10 years. What has amazed me is being a former  
15 Missouri boy, the Missouri person was always a very conservative  
16 hard-headed individual but yet how easily \$10 million against  
17 \$150,000.00 last week convinced the people in Missouri to allow  
18 the boats there. I consider this my home but my heart is still  
19 back where I'm from.

20 I have a story of a gentleman who came to Las Vegas  
21 a few years ago, quite a few years ago now, who had called the  
22 suicide hotline here. I actually had my phone number listed  
23 with an organization called HELP. They apparently could get no  
24 one at the suicide hotline to help this gentleman. He was at a  
25 casino down on Boulder Highway. He was ready to kill himself  
26 and I went down to pick him up. He had not been a compulsive

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1 gambling type individual and I don't use the word pathological  
2 because to me that's eventually going to cast the burden on  
3 society as far as paying for my medical care.

4 I believe I'm responsible so I still call it  
5 compulsive gambling. He had threatened to end his life. He was  
6 a business man out of the State of Wyoming who had a restaurant  
7 at the airport, also had a restaurant downtown in his sixties.  
8 He wasn't a bum on the street. He was a well-organized  
9 business man. Somehow he had gotten involved in going to South  
10 Dakota when they opened up, I believe it was, gaming, a 110-mile  
11 drive.

12 Pretty soon that wasn't good enough for him because  
13 Vegas is the big city. That's the bright lights and that's how  
14 I see this spreading throughout the country. We are opening up  
15 -- it's like when I was a young man and went into a tavern, a  
16 local tavern, I couldn't drink, but I was allowed to go in there  
17 and play the pinball machines. When I got old enough to drink,  
18 that's where I went to drink. I was accustomed to that.

19 The spread of gaming throughout the country is going  
20 to probably bring people here but it's also creating problems in  
21 other societies that are not prepared for it as I believe Doctor  
22 Quinn spoke on. I don't believe you'll ever prepare all the  
23 states, all the cities for this type of gaming for the results  
24 that can happen from it. Las Vegas is different.

25 Mr. Bible, I read about him many times in the  
26 newspaper. I respect him. We have apparently a system here

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1 that has worked for years but that doesn't mean that there  
2 shouldn't be changes such as the convenience stores, the grocery  
3 stores. I -- this gentleman from Wyoming had 20 some odd credit  
4 cards with him when he got out here. Every one of them were  
5 max'd out. He had probably a \$25,000.00 van. We took it down  
6 to Tom Calvert, I believe it was, at night and left it because  
7 he couldn't pay the bills for it.

8 He lost both restaurants, lost everything that he  
9 had worked hard for all of his life. He was - - the last time I  
10 consulted with him, he was working in a 7-11 sweeping the floor.  
11 These are the types of things that happen to individuals. I was  
12 going to speak about my life but my life is still going on. I  
13 would like to close with something that may be termed as a shock  
14 tactic but it's in actuality things that can happen with  
15 individuals.

16 This is a note written 3/4/96. On one side of the  
17 page is the Gamblers Anonymous phone number. At the bottom,  
18 "This is a true and accurate copy of this facsimile document  
19 received by this office, Clark County Coroner Medical  
20 Examination". "I've been a failure most of my life. I'd been  
21 warned by all my family members to stop gambling. I keep on  
22 saying yes but I keep on gambling and never win. All of my  
23 paychecks and whatever I win it goes back in. I'm so far back in  
24 all of my payments not counting the IRS, I can't keep this up.

25 I'm a loser and there's nothing I can do about it.  
26 People like me don't deserve to live. All I do is make everyone

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1 suffer including myself. It's time to put a stop to it", and he  
2 did at Lake Mead on that day. He blew his brains out. What I  
3 want to see out of this gaming commission is some compassion,  
4 some thought about individuals such as this individual because  
5 there is a problem among us that is not being -- we're not being  
6 able to handle among ourselves and availability is a primary  
7 problem.

8 I want to thank the Commission for this opportunity.  
9 I want to apologize for being among doctors and PhD's and stuff  
10 and not really -- and being very nervous, but I hope that my  
11 thoughts on compassion and love and direction for the gaming  
12 industry will take hold and that people throughout the country  
13 will see this is not the panacea that we think it is. Thank  
14 you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

16 (Applause)

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And, indeed, no apologies are  
18 necessary. Your testimony was very eloquent and very relevant  
19 and very important to the work of this Commission.

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